

2-10-1845

Letter from James B. Finley to Leroy Swormstedt

James B. Finley

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Tanesville Feb 10 A 1845.

Dear Bro Swarnsted I received your circular on the 9th Instant and have not had time properly to read that I might understand ^{until today} and after a most careful and deliberate perusal, I must return it without my Signature, or approval, for the following reasons. ^{which} if you should publish, in the western Advocate I request you to hand this letter to Dr Elliott, and request him to give it a place with the circular.

1st I object to the circular as it seems to me to constitute a board of Judges unknown in Methodism and that by a process very premature it would manifest on the part of the agents and commissioners an unbecoming anxiety and forwardness in this matter as if they were strongly desirous that there should be a division of the Methodist Church.

2nd ^{say} our Brethren in the South with a Bishop at their head ^{say} that they stand on the platform of Methodism we of the north profess the same thing then there is no need of division; and who knows but at their meeting at Lewisville next may that they may take into their heads to expel the South and general conference too then there will be no need of setting apart for them 3rd. their annual conferences have not all voted on the alteration of the 6th article. Some have laid it over until they see what the South would do. and the votes of those who have voted would not be a fair decision of the case perhaps. Some of them voted against the alteration for this obvious reason they believed that the alteration was recommended only in case the South did secede and that organization should be announced; and not wishing to promote a secession from the Church would not tempt them to leave but after such a thing had taken place they might give their votes very differently.

How
Levy Swarnsted
business note

Thus

Levy Swarnsted
1845
C. H. M.

4th I object to it; is the general conference directed no more
of which the votes of the annual conferences might be
ascertained so of course the agents & commissioners
have no authority whatever to issue such a circular mak-
ing the proposed request of the Secretaries of the annual
conferences it looks to me too much like a self made
Board of Judges who wanted merely to do something for
which they have no more disciplinary authority
than they would have to consecrate a bishop for
the South if they should decide.

5th I object to it because it is wholly unnecessary
that it should now be attended to for the whole action
of the general conference in regard to a deviation of
property proceeded on the fact that the South should
secede and organize otherwise we have nothing to
do with it at all and then not until there should be
a constitutional number of votes to authorize such deviation
and this cannot be lawfully obtained until the jour-
nals of all the annual conferences are brought up to the
general conference and a committee appointed officially
to examine and report and any action on the part
of the agents or commissioners, ^{in this case} would be without law
and in my opinion leading by premature

I can only conceive of the power of the commissioners by
the resolution of general conference "That Nathan Bangs
George Peck & J. B. Linley be and are hereby appointed
commissioners to act in concert with the same number
of commissioners appointed by the Southern organization
(should one be formed) to estimate the amount which
will fall due to the South by the proceeding nulls".
This is all the power the general conference has
authorized ~~in~~ exercise they have no where said you
shall collect & count the votes of all the annual
conferences and then determine whether

there is a constitutional majority in favor of
alteration ~~or not~~. This is not our business and I
beg to be excused from signing your call and
although I am heart of all I will advise you all to
let it alone
J. B. Linley

P.S. I thank you for your kind invitation to
visit your city but find it out of my power to
do so in March ~~if~~ we have surmised that there
is some danger on the Editor of the Advocate for
as some think his too much leaning to the South
but if they should attempt to remove or censure his
manly defence of our beloved Methodism they will
beard the lion in his den and that hand will wither
if ever the Ohio Annual Conference meets they little think
you have in Cincinnati boys of yesterday and old
uncle Billy of their head must not suppose they can
drive or divide the Philanthropy of Methodism in ^{the west}
It has been taken more here in this country that
the knees of I swarmed troubles and that he is more
than half converted but told them no. It is not
true he is not a man of adox. but we were all
much astonished by Mr. Stetson's exposition the some
of the Sir that left Virginia because of slavery
and the man who stood up at G. C. like a man
his milk and water dose was a matter of astonishment
~~that he will see better after a while he must have~~
been as those who dream God bless us all
and save men from twisifications My love to
all and now forever
J. B. Linley
Rev. Leroy Swannick